

VILLA LA FONT.

The Fountain colony of Colorado—a new and enterprising—Colorado springs purchased and a city to be founded—One of the most striking spots in Colorado—Full description.

When Fitz Hugh Ludlow visited Colorado gathering data for his well-known volume "The Heart of the Continent" it was his good fortune to tarry for a while at the foot of Pike's peak, indulging in the exquisite luxuries of the country and gratifying his taste and thirst with the carbonated waters of the springs on the Fountain or aquiferous. When he had recovered from the fatigues of the tour and had gathered his notes ready to the work at hand, he recorded the following as a slight sketch of his enthusiasm over that portion of Colorado immediately to the south of us, which has hitherto been removed from actual contact with the tourist simply by distance from the main thoroughfares of the country. Says Ludlow, reviewing the efficacy of these waters and looking into the future: "These springs are very highly estimated among the visitors of this region for their virtue in the cure of rheumatism, all rheumatic diseases, and the special class for which the practitioners' sole dependence has hitherto been mercury. When Colorado becomes a state, the springs of the Fountain will receive the name. In air and scenery no more glorious summer residence could be imagined. The Colorado of the future, stretching the width of the Rocky foot-hills by a railroad from Denver to the Colorado springs, and running down on Saturday to stop over Sunday with the family, will have little cause to envy an eastern or western. Starting at the picket up and down the pass of the Rio Grande, ranging the foothills of the Rockies with that lovely air, pure unbroken before, which is floating down upon him over the snow-peaks of the range."

Mr. Ludlow wrote well, but Colorado will not have become a state when the pleasure which is drawn above in such varied colors shall have been realized. The day is dawning near, and is now, in fact, upon us, when the Colorado springs at the foot of Pike's peak shall be utilized and made to realize all that has been predicted of them. Their increase in mineral products has long been known, and yet no correct analysis has ever been made of them. They have been off the ordinary route of tourists and invalids, who, while desiring strongly to visit them, have been deterred from so doing by the tediousness of the old mode of travel by stage. The Denver and Rio Grande railway, however, is the entering wedge which is to draw the southern country with its grandeur of natural beauty and richness of mineral products open to all, and to place the springs, the peaks, and the great rocky gardens close to the threshold of all other portions of the territory. This road is working a wonderful change, and already capital and enterprise are looking southward for advertising openings. Not since capital and business interests, last century, are moving towards this delightful spot, of which we have just made mention.

We have in these columns, heretofore, written in detail of the colonial enterprise which has been prospecting for favorable locations on the Arkansas, the Gunnison and other southern streams, but it has been felt for us at this time to call attention to an undertaking that exceeds all the others in design and boldness of execution; one headed by some of the most prominent gentlemen of this territory and the west, and which promises to develop into success in every particular.

For some time past a number of gentlemen have been negotiating for a large tract of land in the vicinity of the base of Pike's peak, the same to include the famous Colorado springs. This company have purchased the springs and a large number of acres in the mountain vicinity, comprising some four hundred and eighty rods, or one acre each, on the Fountain, and ten thousand acres on Mountain creek. They will there lay out a town to be known as Colorado Springs, on the line of the Denver and Rio Grande railway, the springs proper being about five miles from the road. The springs have been christened Villa la Font, and will be provided with a postoffice and telegraph station, as will also the railroad depot. From the depot to the Villa a fine carriage road will be constructed. Villa la Font has the celebrated Ute pass, from which El Paso county derives its name. The natural beauty from this point is stupendous. In the background stand to the east of the semicircle, the grand dome of Pike's peak; immediately to front and left, and about eight miles away, another mountain—Cheyenne mountain, the bold outline that completes the picture; and on the right are the pinnacles of the gods. The company will build a hotel at Colorado Springs, the railroad depot, using a temporary building for the present with the intention of erecting one next spring to cost at least \$100,000. They will also establish at the springs a bottling business with the best apparatus made for bottling the waters and saving the carbonic gas. This will form one of the industrial objects of the colony.

Professor Hayden, in his report on Colorado, says of these springs: "Perhaps the feature of the greatest general interest in this region is the aquiferous, which are located about three miles above Colorado City, in the valley of Fountain creek. The country around them is grand beyond any I have ever seen in the vicinity of any other medicinal springs. There are four of them. The first one is close to the road, within fifty feet of the creek. For a distance of sixty feet or more around the spring there is a deposit of incrustation in this layer. About two hundred yards above the first spring is the second one, on the right side of the creek. This is much the largest one, and has formed a basin six or eight feet deep, from the centre of which boils up a violent current. On the opposite side of the creek, not more than twenty-five feet from it, and located about ten feet above it, is a third small spring. The water is stronger than that of the others, and is used principally for drinking purposes. The fourth spring is perhaps five feet above the second, on the right side of the creek, and within four feet of the water's edge. Its waters are rather chalybeate than otherwise. The basin of the second spring is about four feet deep, and is used for bathing. The first three springs are strongly impregnated with carbonic acid gas, and are the true springs." The temperature of the springs is about 60°.

The chief spring, christened by Professor Hayden the "Doctor," and which is probably the richest medicinal spring in the world, containing as it does certain gases of medicated water to every portion of water, will be called the "Doctor," or "Salem spring." The chalybeate spring, whose waters resemble those of Pyrenees, in Europe, will likewise be known as the "Iron Spring." The "Great spring" will keep its present name. It will be called in plain English, the "Bottling Fountain." Another, called by the Indians the "Beast," bears the fact that "old beasts were wont to drink the water to heal their disease" will be known as the "Narrows."

The city of Villa la Font will be located about three miles northwest of Colorado City, in the Ute pass, and, as we have mentioned above, about eight miles from Cheyenne mountain. In this connection we cannot resist the temptation to quote at this point Mr. Ludlow's beautiful description of Cheyenne mountain. He says: "Its height is several thousand feet less than Pike's; but its contour is so ruin, and so massive, that the disadvantage is overlooked. There is a variety of elevation in it unsurpassed by any mountain I have ever seen. It is full of living power. In the declining daylight its vast simple surface becomes the broadest mass of blue and purple shadow that ever lay on the earth of nature." If such a spot is not the counterpart of an earthly Eden, where will it be found?

The company which has this matter in hand is composed of some of the most reliable parties in the country. Several have been identified with the Greeley colony and have done a great work in developing that organization and bringing it to its present state of perfection and success. The colony is now open to membership. The figures are not yet definitely settled upon, but will consist in general plan those adopted for the membership of the Greeley colony. The stock is fixed at \$250,000, of which \$100,000 have already been subscribed, at \$100 per share, by prominent persons in New York, Philadelphia, St. Louis and Colorado. By the time the Denver and Rio Grande railway is completed to Colorado Springs the hotel will be ready for the reception of tourists, and will be large enough to accommodate all.

A brief description of the proposed workings of the colony plan will be pertinent at this point. The organization is to be known as the Fountain colony of Colorado, to have two-thirds of the lands purchased at school cost price, and all the profits made by the colony in these lands are to be devoted to general improvements. For instance: A piece of land which costs \$10 per acre will be divided into eight acre lots. These lots at \$100 would leave above the average cost of each lot about \$60 to be devoted to improvements. This is upon the plan of Greeley colony. Lots will be sold at \$100, minimum; highest price for choice corner lots to visitors, about \$200 each. The person who purchases one lot at the minimum price of \$10 will be entitled to all the privileges of low transportation for his family and contract rate for household goods by freight. Each member will be entitled to select in person at the regular drawings, the dates to be fixed upon hereafter, one business and one residence lot, or one residence lot and one outside piece of property. He will have four months to make arrangements; if he has done nothing in that time, his selection will be vacated, and he will be given the opportunity to make a new selection. If he has done nothing within the first year in the way of improvements, the money is to be refunded by the colony. The only conditions upon the colonists are that they must improve their claims before they can obtain their titles. The colony will be given prohibiting the manufacture or sale of intoxicating liquors as a beverage in all places of public resort, as at Greeley. The officers of the colony will assist themselves from the rest in prospecting and homesteading lands outside their city limits and privileges, without additional expense above government fees. They will also assist any colonist, in securing timbered land for the erection of new mills.

The leading business of the colony, besides the manufacture of lumber, for which the country of that colony is fortunately supplied by heavy timber, and the men of industry who will flock thither through the enticing influence of health-giving climate and the energizing springs, will be the raising of early vegetables and small fruits, including peaches, apricots, grapes, etc., for the Denver and northern Colorado markets. The climate of the section south of the Divide is much milder than the other portions of the territory, as it is entirely sheltered by the natural rise of land, from the north winds. The many orchards on the Arkansas and other streams have hitherto given the most flattering indications of success, and there is no reason to believe but that the enterprise of the Fountain colony will eventuate profitably to all concerned. The range of mercury during the winter months is about the same as in Arkansas, and rains seem to have delayed the formation of a truly-producing country.

A wagon road will be made from Villa la Font to near the summit of Pike's peak, and a trail road, also, up the same peak, for the benefit of tourists. A hotel, to be called the Top-Top house, will be erected at the summit of Pike's peak.

No person has as yet been selected for president of the colony, although several prominent gentlemen of the United States have been mentioned. General H. A. Usilton, of Greeley, formerly vice-president and superintendent of Union colony, is vice-president, superintendent and general manager of this colony. W. E. Palmer is secretary, and Mr. E. S. McElroy is chief engineer; both of these gentlemen having formerly held similar positions in Union colony, and Mr. William F. Mellen, late of New York, and now of the Denver and Rio Grande railway, is treasurer.

The city of Colorado Springs has not yet been surveyed, but the engineer corps of the colony will start work next week for the purpose of laying out the town-site and raising the main canal for the conveyance of water.

Those who may desire to acquire further information than we have been able to give here, owing to the press-open our columns, also, as are necessary, etc., by addressing the secretary of the Fountain colony of Colorado, at Colorado Springs, one Colorado City postoffice. Postpaid will be mailed free.

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